



Botwell House Catholic Primary School

ATTENDANCE POLICY

October 2019

Mission Statement:

Botwell House Catholic Primary School is distinguished by the care, courtesy and concern extended to all its members, regardless of cultural differences and strives to follow the teachings of Jesus Christ to:

“Love one another as I have loved you”

Through a partnership between home, school and parish and through a broad and balanced curriculum, each valued individual is encouraged to grow in their journey of faith and strive towards excellence.

Botwell House Catholic Primary School seeks to ensure that all pupils receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise his/her potential.

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1. Aims

Botwell House Catholic Primary school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Support parents to value their children's education and enable it through consistent attendance.

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons. The term 'regular' is defined as when well enough to attend school with an attendance above 95%. Good attendance would be 98% or above.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. School procedures

3.1 Attendance register

By law, our school is required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day (8:45am) and once at the start of the second session (1:00pm). It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made. Pupils must arrive in school at the start of learning which is 8:45am each school day. Due to the size of the school they must be in through the school gate by 8:50am to ensure that they are in classes before the 8:55am register closure. Children coming in after 8:50am are recorded as late and escorted to the classroom by a member of staff so as to avoid any inaccuracies in registration.

3.2 Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – The expectation is that the parent/carer contacts via phone (option 1 Child absence), email or visiting the school office in person. If there is no contact from the parent/carer and the child is absent then the office staff will ring to enquire as to the whereabouts of the child and their current health. It is a statutory requirement for children to be in school if not in poor health.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If a parent/carer states that their child was ill for a period of 3 days or more then the school will require medical evidence to support this or the absence may not be authorised. Medical evidence includes: prescribed medicine containers with child's name on; prescription with child's name on; hospital or doctor appointment letters or cards with child's name on. The school can also ask the parents/carers for consent to allow our allocated School Nurse to contact health services to verify absences.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

The school has a duty in law to refer any absence of 10 days or more where we have been unable to make contact with the parent/carer or we have concerns about the absence to the Participation Team

at the local authority. If however we have concerns and are unable to contact the family, we will contact the local authority Participation Team to request they do a home visit within 3 days of the start of the absence. If they are unable to do this, then a member of the Leadership Team may undertake the visit.

3.3 Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary and returned back to school if the school day is still running.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

3.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

3.5 Following up absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

3.6 Reporting to parents

Registration certificates for attendance are sent out termly to parents and also at the end of year with their reports.

We have to send a report to the London Borough of Hillingdon every month for any child whose attendance falls below 90% and the parent will also receive the registration certificate as well.

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

A request for your child to have leave of absence during school time must be made on a pink EXCEPTIONAL LEAVE APPLICATION FORM (available at the school office,) prior to booking any travel arrangements and with at least 2 weeks notice before the dates requested.

Each request is considered individually. These requests are, as the name states: exceptional.

After submitting an Exceptional Leave Application Form parents/carers may be required to meet with the Headteacher before a decision is made. You may also be asked to submit additional information in relation to your request.

Where the parents/carers keep a child away for longer than any agreed absence, then the extra time is marked as UNAUTHORISED.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

4.2 Legal sanctions

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

Sometimes children are reluctant to attend school for a variety of reasons (*eg. Friendship issues, tests, particular lessons, homework days*). Any problems in this area are best sorted out between the parent/carer and the class teacher, in the first instance, and as soon as possible. If it continues to be an issue then parents/carers can contact the Deputy Headteacher to discuss the issues and receive advice and support.

Parents/carers are expected to contact the school at an early stage if there is regular absence of their child so we can work together to resolve any issues or problems. This approach is very successful. However, if difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Participation Team from the **London Borough of Hillingdon**. Our school Participation Officer will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, these officers can use court proceedings to prosecute

6. Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer monitors pupil absence on a daily basis, however a formal attendance report is sent to the Local Authority on a monthly basis. If an individual pupil's attendance level falls below 90% on our monthly attendance reports to the local authority, without good reason, a referral to the Participation Team Officer will be made by the school. Following investigation any unresolved issue could result in the parent/carers receiving a Penalty Notice (currently £60 per parent per child) or ultimately a prosecution under the Education Act.

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy. The schools link governor for behaviour and attitudes is Mary Clavin.

7.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

7.3 The Participation Team

The Participation Team:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

7.4 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office. They relay emerging concerns about absence directly to parents to make them aware of this and also to find out if any patterns be forming with poor attendance

7.5 Office staff

Office staff are expected to take calls and emails from parents about absence and record it within SIMs.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed every three years by the Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board for their information.

9. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance

T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day